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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 001058

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR EUR/CACEN, RPM ABABEZ

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [AM](#) [GG](#) [RU](#)

SUBJECT: RUSSIAN ARMS TRANSFER FROM GEORGIA TO ARMENIA  
UNDERWAY

REF: A) YEREVAN 1020 B) BAKU 855

Classified By: Amb. John M. Evans for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

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SUMMARY  
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1. (C) Armenian officials have confirmed news reports that the transfer of materiel from Russian military bases in Georgia to a Russian military base in Armenia is already underway. According to Russian DCM Igor Gromyko, the transfer will not violate the conditions of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. Adding Russian materiel to already existing stockpiles does not appear to threaten to shift the region's current military balance of power. On June 2, President Kocharian told Senator Hagel that permitting this transfer of Russian equipment was "Armenia's contribution to resolving" the impasse in Georgia. End Summary.

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REPORTS OF TRANSFERS ALREADY UNDERWAY  
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2. (C) Russian DCM Igor Gromyko told us that Russian and Georgian negotiators had "agreed" to a January 1, 2008, withdrawal deadline from Georgia. Armenian news sources reported that a cargo train from the Russian base in Batumi had already arrived at the Russian base in Gyumri, loaded with military materiel. Armenian Defense Minister Serzh Sargsian told visiting Senator Hagel (ref A) that Armenian customs officials had cleared the train at the border, but he had no information on the specifics of the cargo. Unconfirmed news reports asserted the cargo ranged from excess ammunition to long-range missiles to other "military hardware."

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DO ADDITIONAL RUSSIAN ARMS REALLY CHANGE ANYTHING?  
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3. (C) According to Gromyko, "weaponry" transferred to Gyumri will remain on the Russian base in Gyumri under exclusive Russian control. Gromyko dismissed GOAJ protests (ref B) against the base transfers, saying complainers "are few, but they bark with loud voices." Azerbaijan should understand, he continued, that "everything is going to remain under Russian control," and in clear compliance with the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. Azerbaijan should not try to associate the transfer of weapons to anything related to Nagorno-Karabakh, he insisted.

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RUSSIAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN ARMENIA  
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4. (C) Russia currently has an estimated five-thousand troops in Armenia, including approximately two-thousand five-hundred border guards, mostly stationed along the Armenia-Turkey border. Russia maintains one military base in Gyumri, Armenia, with subunits in Yerevan. Russia also shares facilities and hangars planes at an Armenian base near Erebuni.

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COMMENT: STATUS QUO NOT SET TO CHANGE  
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5. (C) During his meeting with President Kocharian, Senator Hagel inquired about the issue of transferring Russian materiel to Armenian bases. Kocharian confirmed that he had discussed the issue several times with President Putin and agreed to permit the transfer of part of the equipment as Armenia's "contribution to the solution" of a thorny problem. Kocharian said it was "not a major issue" and did not understand Azerbaijan's reaction.

6. (C) The GOAM and Gromyko independently assert that the transfer of additional Russian armaments to already-existing Russian military facilities in Armenia does not change the regional balance of power. We have no reason to doubt that the materiel will remain under Russian control. Provided

this remains the case and CFE limits are not exceeded, we see  
no measurable impact on the current regional status quo.  
EVANS